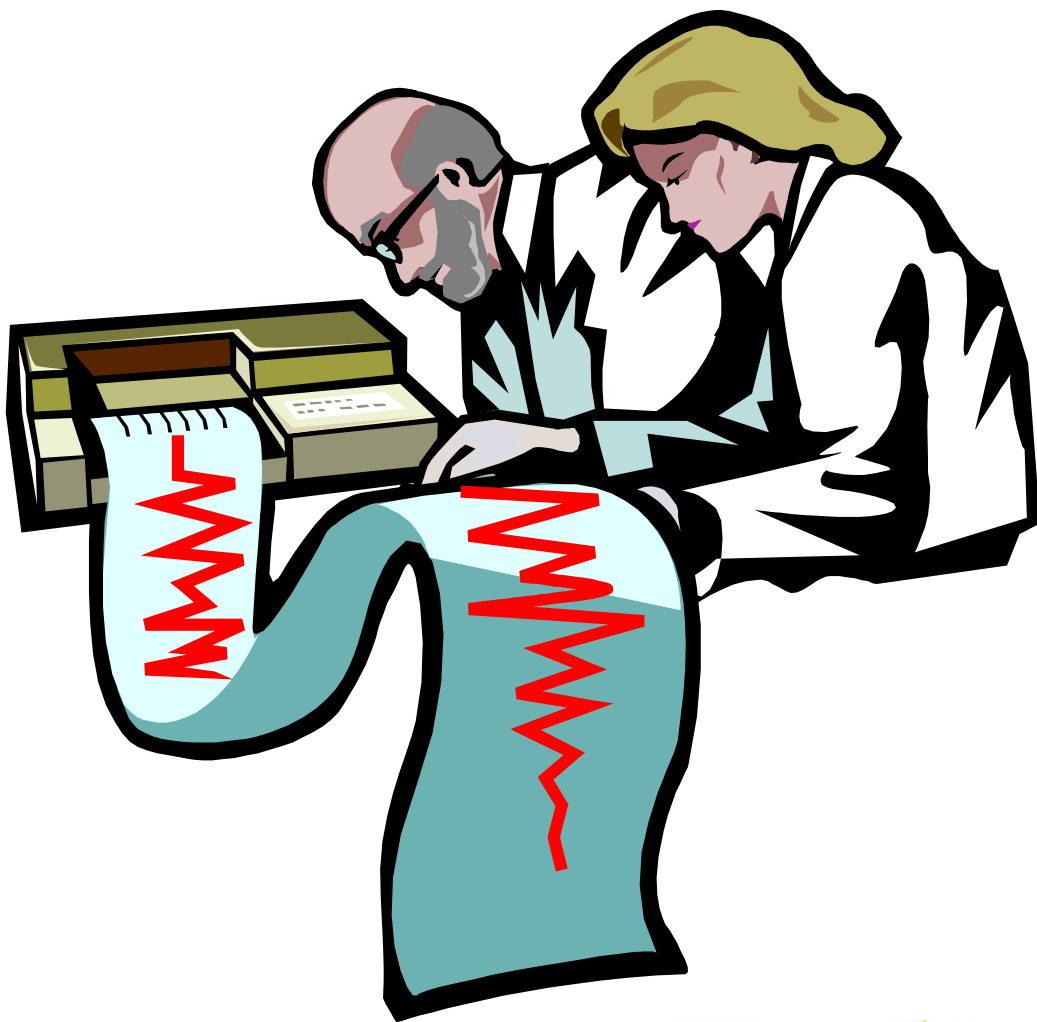


# ***JOB SEARCH AND LABOR MARKET RESEARCH***



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## LOOKING FOR WORK

**F**inding work is 90% preparation and 10% direct action. In this session, you will have the opportunity to compare the most effective methods of seeking work with the ways most people look for jobs. You'll have the opportunity to build a plan for your own work search, practice employer contacts and making brief presentations to employers. You will also spend some time learning to explore the Internet.

The labor market is dramatically different than it was five years ago. The use of technology has had a huge impact on the way business is conducted and staffed. Businesses of all sizes are outsourcing their work on a regular basis. As a result, people are changing jobs more frequently in their working lifetimes. The average adult will change occupations about every 5 years. Because of these changes, people are now much more responsible for managing their own knowledge and skills. To be prepared to conduct an effective work search you need to:

- ◆ Know what you have to offer – know what your skills are and how to express them;
- ◆ Know what skills and abilities are needed in your labor market – research employers;
- ◆ Know what methods employers use most frequently to hire new employees and be prepared to incorporate those methods into your own job search plan;
- ◆ Develop a personal work search plan and be willing to invest an appropriate amount of time in following it – have a plan or chart to follow on a daily or regular basis; and
- ◆ Practice and modify your work search as needed – regularly check if the steps you are taking work and be prepared to make changes as necessary.

**Helpful Hint:** Set your goals, make a plan and stick to it. Periodically, look back at your job search progress and ask yourself – are you doing what you need to do to find work?

### **M**ost & Least Effective Job Search Methods

According to Dick Gaither, author of the “Wizard of Work,” it can take anywhere from 200 – 400 contacts and 20 – 40 interviews before getting the job you want. With these kinds of figures, it's easy to see why a job seeker must develop a planned, coordinated, systematic approach for finding the next job. A successful job search must be treated as full time work in order to obtain the desired results – getting the job you want without wasting time on unnecessary steps. Generally speaking, there are about ten regular mistakes job seekers make while conducting a job search that ultimately prolongs a period of unemployment. They are:

1. Not knowing what you want to do. A lack of clear goals.
2. Not taking the initiative – the willingness to develop a plan of action and pursue it.
3. Limiting your employment prospects or not being aware of other employment options.
4. Failure to approach the job search from the employer's perspective.
5. Limiting employer contacts to a single question, “Are you hiring?”
6. Not speaking directly to a hiring authority.
7. Using impersonal approaches, i.e., mailing resumes or applications.
8. Developing a generic, unfocused resume.
9. Overlooking your selling points ( the ability to know and demonstrate your skills and knowledge.)
10. Failure to follow through with a potential employer or network contact.

All of these typical mistakes are easily correctable. There have been a number of studies that identify how people look for work and which of those methods are successful. Very often, we find that our own practices don't typically fall in the most successful category. Once we have identified our own methods and compare them to the successful methods, we have the opportunity to adjust our own strategies to increase our effectiveness and bring us in line with our desired goal.

There are usually a variety of reasons why we choose to use the tools that we often do. Often, we choose what is most comfortable and most familiar – that which requires very little risk. If it takes 200 – 400 contacts and 20 – 40 interviews to land a job, it means you are required to open yourself up to a lot of rejection. Rejection causes a feeling of self-doubt and vulnerability. Our bodies respond to rejection by attempting to protect us by creating feelings of resistance. Resistance is the lump that is in the middle of our gut that says to our minds, **“No, you don't want to do that!”**

To combat resistance, we need to develop a plan of attack that examines our personal motives. What mental tools are at our disposal to convince the pit of our stomachs that the risk is worth it? The first and foremost tool is to take whatever task is in front of us and break it down to it's smallest, most easily completed piece. Do that piece, then the next. Register each piece as a small accomplishment that will turn into a large accomplishment, the ideal job!

**The proven, most successful method for obtaining work is a planned, coordinated approach that involves:**

- ◆ Knowing your skills
- ◆ Knowing what fields of work utilize these skills
- ◆ Researching organizations that hire people with these skills
- ◆ Using networks to establish employer contacts
- ◆ Directly contacting the person with the authority to hire
- ◆ Presenting your skills to an employer in a way that demonstrates how you can meet their needs

<b>Least effective job search methods:</b>	<b>Most effective job search methods:</b>
Private employment (fee) agencies – 5% success	Planned, coordinated approach that involves the above mentioned skills and knowledge criteria – 86% success
Ads in professional or trade journals – 7% success	In a Job Club, calling employers in your area that hire employees with your skills - 84% success
Mass mailing resumes – 7% success	On your own, calling employers after identifying those that hire people with your skills – 69% success
Going to where employers pick out workers – 8% success	Contacting employers or organizations that interest you – 69% success
Local newspaper ads – 12% success	Establishing a network and contacting those people for job leads, joining professional associations in your field of work – 33% success
Former teacher or professor – 12% success	Temporary (no fee) agencies where 29% of temporary employees find permanent positions – 29% success
Checking jobs posted at the local Job Service Center – 14% success	Using the Internet to identify, research and contact employers – could be as high as 25%

These statistics are national and may adjust slightly to your local area.

## Researching Your Labor Market

**T**he most successful job seeker takes the laser beam approach to finding work. Focused, narrow, powerful. Job search is a planned, coordinated approach. It involves: knowing your skills, what fields of work utilize these skills, researching organizations, using networks to establish an employer contact, directly contacting the person with the authority to hire and presenting your skills to that employer in a way that demonstrates how you can meet their needs. Labor market research is an active preparation step that nets substantial rewards.

Where are the jobs that you are qualified to do? What type of work interests you? Who are the employers that hire people with your skills and abilities? What needs do the employers in your area have that you could fill? How do these employers hire? Finding the answers to these questions will make the time you invest in your job search much more productive.

### **B**egin the Research Trail

There are a variety of resources available that provide business listings and general information about companies. You can use this information to discover what is happening within your field or occupation as well as information about particular employers. It's also extremely useful in identifying employers you want to contact for potential job openings or more information about their business.

### **Resources for Labor Market Information**

#### ✓ **Local phone books:**

Between the yellow pages and business section, you have access to the names of all the businesses in your local area. The yellow pages are arranged alphabetically by type of service or business. While the business section is listed in alphabetical order, it shares no information about the type of work that is conducted there.

However, it does list nearly every business name and phone numbers that are in the area.

#### ✓ **The Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Council:**

Have listings and brief descriptions of member organizations in their geographical area.

#### ✓ **The local library:**

Contains publications including:

- ◆ Union and Trade directories and professional magazines;
- ◆ Local business journals: publications that report on regional businesses. They often publish a book of business listings annually;
- ◆ Lead Source directories: list of local businesses defined by zip code;
- ◆ Dunn and Bradstreet reference materials on manufacturers, corporate management, and transportation (also available on the Internet.)

#### ✓ **Local Job Service Centers and Work Source Centers:**

Host a variety of written publications and software resources that provide labor market information.

- ◆ WILMA (Washington Interactive Labor Market Access): Software and Internet versions that provide employer contact information based on occupation and industry;
- ◆ Free access to the Internet; and
- ◆ Make available many of the publications also carried by the libraries as well as other printed materials regarding local labor market conditions.

✓ **The Internet:**

Job boards and individual company web pages. America's Career Infonet.

✓ **Employment agencies:**

We have a list of local employment agencies. Recruiting agencies advertise on the Internet and in local newspapers.

✓ **College Placement Centers:**

Provide access to career directories, alumni directories, association directories, job postings, employer directories, recruitment information, annual reports, job descriptions, and employee surveys.

## **N**etworking as Research

Networking has proven to be a highly effective aspect of any job search.

Through the people you know and come into contact with on a daily basis, you have access to information about the job, employer

or general field of work you are interested in. Some of these people know about actual job openings. Others have some information about or know of someone who works in the occupation or for the particular employer you are interested in working for.

Consider networking to be a general, pre-research tool you make active use of before conducting informational interviews. Many of the same questions you use during informational interviews will be valuable to you when talking with your personal network contacts. The chart below will serve as both a memory jogger (enabling you to start a list of all the people you know might have information for you) as well as an idea of other contacts that might prove useful in collecting the kind of information you are seeking.

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### **Individual Contacts**

Accountant	Former employers	Members of your clubs
Attorney	Former neighbors	Neighbors
Baby-sitter	Former teachers	Parents of your children's friends
Bank teller	Friends	Parents of your friends
Bus driver	Gas station attendant	People who provide services you use
Clergy	Grocery clerk	People you play sports with
Co-workers	Hair stylist	People you see at the coffee shop
Employers	Insurance agent	Relatives
Former classmates	Mail carrier	
Former co-workers	Members of your church	

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### **Associations**

Chamber of Commerce	Personnel Departments	Sport leagues
Convention rosters	Political interest groups	Trade shows
Corporate directories	Professional associations	Vendors
Networking groups	Social clubs	Veteran groups

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## Important Networking Tips

- ◆ **Tell everyone** you know that you are looking for work.
- ◆ **Be specific** about your skills and what you are looking for in a job. For example, let your contacts know that you are good with your hands or that you would like to find a job where you can use your excellent organizational skills.
- ◆ **Appear neatly dressed** whenever you are outside your home. You never know when you will run into a contact or a potential contact at the grocery store, gas station, or post office.

## To Best Utilize Your Contacts

- ◆ Do your homework first. Do not take up a contact's time with questions you could have easily researched at the library.
- ◆ Have a specific objective in mind. Make it clear what your contact can do to help you in your job search.
- ◆ Respect their schedule. Stick to your specific objective and don't waste their time.
- ◆ Get the names of other people they may know who may be helpful. Ask permission to use your contact as a reference when calling the new contacts.
- ◆ Get the correct spelling of every contact's name!
- ◆ Ask if you can follow up with a phone call in a week or two. They may pay more attention to job possibilities if they know you will be calling them back.
- ◆ Send sincere thank you notes for the help they provide to you.

## Four Levels of Networking

### 1. Personal Network

These are family members, friends, acquaintances, and neighbors who can serve as your support network. Along with supplying job leads, personal contacts can provide several kinds of support:

- ◆ Organizational support: They can help you set up a plan and stick to it.
- ◆ Moral support: They can provide encouragement throughout your job search process.
- ◆ Financial support: In some situations, they can help fund your job search.
- ◆ Personal feedback: Ask them how you can improve your resume, interview outfit, and appearance.
- ◆ Logistical support: They may do research for you, type letters and participate in role-plays.

### 2. Colleague Network

These are your co-workers, past and present, as well as fellow job seekers. They can provide you with important job search information and leads.

### 3. Professional Network

- ◆ These are people you know who's work carries a certain standing or credibility. For example: consultants, executives, managers, or professors.
- ◆ Professional contacts may be able to assist your job search in many ways:
- ◆ Introductions to executives in firms related to your needs.
- ◆ Knowledge of organizational changes that are not yet public knowledge.
- ◆ Arranging introduction interviews with authorities in your fields of interest.
- ◆ Names of growing organizations and the challenges those organizations face.

- ◆ Knowledge of openings that are about to be announced.
- ◆ Suggestions about career choices.
- ◆ Referral to specific information sources.
- ◆ Resume review and critique.
- ◆ Recommendations and referrals to particular employers.

#### 4. Outer Network

These are people with which you do not have a personal link. Many of these people are in daily touch with changes in direction and opportunity in different fields and industries. For example: salespersons, personnel managers, editors, and publishers of trade publications, employment service employees, career counselors, and college placement officials. **DON'T FORGET** your lawyer, banker, insurance agent, doctor, dentist, and Realtor!

### **S**ome Suggestions for Choosing a Career

1. Choose an occupation because you like the work, not solely because of the rewards in money or prestige.
2. Do not expect to find a job in which you never have to do anything you dislike.
3. Choose an occupation that will use the abilities you possess.
4. Avoid occupations that require abilities you do not possess.
5. Do not confuse interest and ability.
6. Choose an occupation in which there is likely to be an active demand for workers when you are ready to start.
7. Do not choose an occupation just because a friend or someone else you admire chose it.
8. Before making a final choice of occupation, find out what are all the things you might have to do in it and which will take most of your time.
9. Do not stay permanently in a job in which you dislike most of the things you do.

10. Beware of biased information from recruiters and other sources.
11. Take all the advice that is offered then act on your own judgment.
12. It is just as important to know what you don't want as it is to know what you do want.

### **R**esearching Employers and Informational Interviewing

Conducting an informational interview is often considered the best preparation for obtaining work. When an employer makes a hiring decision, the factors taken into consideration include the applicant's skills, abilities, and work ethics. In order to prevent making an expensive mistake, the employer seeks to determine how well an applicant will "fit" within the organization. Conducting informational interviews allows you to obtain a great deal of information about:

1. Your career field and the specific skills and work values employers want;
2. Employer needs and expectations;
3. How employers you are considering make their hiring decisions;
4. The realities of performing work in a particular organization; and
5. Other organizations in your field that may have needs you can meet.

In addition, you gain valuable interviewing experience and visibility. You have the opportunity to make personal contact with management level personnel and predetermine how your abilities will fit into a particular organization. This information will allow you to best present who you are and what you have to offer in a way that relates to their needs.

People who grant informational interviews are generally willing to volunteer 15 – 20 minutes of their time if they have a clear idea of what you hope to gain from the process. Therefore, be prepared to answer some questions about yourself, especially in regard to your employment goals and the



fact you are preparing for employment in that field. Informational interviews work best when you are contacting an employer that does not have current advertised job openings for your occupation. This gives you greater access to the hidden job market and prevents employers from feeling uncomfortable.

### **A Guide for Conducting Informational Interviews**

1. Identify an employer in your area to contact.
2. Use other tools to perform some initial research about the organization.
3. Use your personal network contacts for information or to help establish an interview – it often helps to get in the door if you can name someone who referred you.
4. Ask for an appointment and indicate you will not take longer than 20 minutes. State that you don't expect them to have a job for you.
5. Provide a brief explanation about your purpose or intent for the interview.
6. Carefully prepare your questions ahead of time. Make them relevant to your goals. Write your questions down and leave a space under each question or series of questions to take notes on the response you receive.
7. Be receptive and show the information is important to you. Demonstrate your ability to listen well.
8. Never ask for a job while you are there. Have your resume on hand in case it is requested.
9. Be prepared to answer questions about yourself. What do you truly want to get from this contact and how will you use the information?
10. Be courteous and professional at all times. Make a good impression. Be on time and be well groomed. You may be coming back and asking for a job in the near future.
11. Stick to your 20-minute time limit no matter how well things are going. It shows respect for their time.
12. Always ask for the name of another contact prior to leaving. This demonstrates your seriousness and keeps your professional network growing in useful ways.
13. Send a thank you note immediately following your interview.
14. Carefully evaluate the information you receive and decide how to proceed based on what you have learned.

### **Sample Informational Interview Questions**

Don't rely solely on these sample questions. Always consider your own expertise in the field and determine ahead of time what it is you really need or want to know. Ask yourself: What information am I looking for?

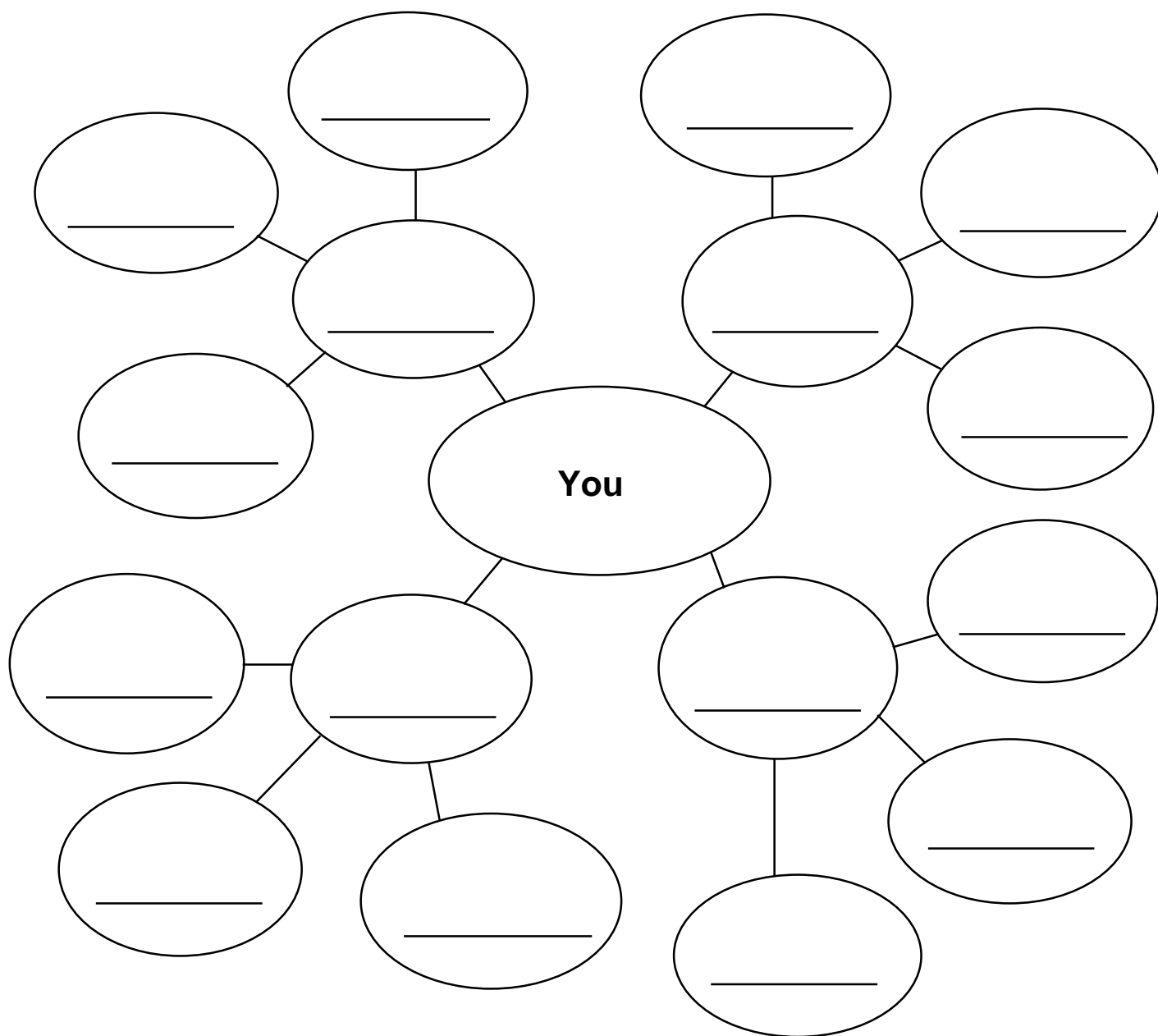
1. The environment: work setting itself, the part of town, particular equipment, etc.
2. The kinds of people here: education or background requirements, organizational structure, work related abilities and self-management skills, etc.
3. The purposes, goals, and values represented or required in the field or organization.
4. The problems here that you may be able to help solve with your skills and knowledge.
5. The future outlook for the industry, organization, occupation.
6. How this field or organization usually hires people, hiring alternatives, how you might get employed there.
7. How business is conducted in this organization versus others, including where you came from.

In order to obtain the answers for these types of questions, you might ask:

1. What skills, abilities, aptitudes, and/or temperaments are needed?
2. What qualifications are needed to perform the job?
3. What type of people do you look for when hiring?
4. What values or personal qualities do you look for in the people you hire?
5. What are your usual standards and expectations of the people you hire here?
6. What is the usual delegation of responsibility?
7. What is the management structure here?
8. Has your organization adopted team management principles? Is it a critical aspect of the business?
9. What are the values of leadership and how are they usually communicated?
10. What aspects of this job are not covered in the job description?
11. What kind of decision-making goes into the work for your particular organization?
12. What kinds of special problems do you deal with?
13. What is the typical day like here for the workers and how does that compare with the similar industries or organizations?
14. What are the business priorities?
15. What is the outlook for this field/organization/occupation? What kind of growth do you anticipate for your business over the next five years?
16. How do you see the organization, type of job, field changing over the next several years? What sorts of changes are occurring now in the occupation?
17. What are the most important immediate and future concerns you see for the organization?
18. What are the agency goals and objectives over the next 6 months?
19. What is your normal hiring practice? Do you generally advertise or prefer referrals?
20. What is the salary/benefit package for this type of work in your organization? How does it compare to similar organizations in the area?
21. How do you keep your staff skills up to date? What kind of training is offered through the business?
22. What is the best way to enter your organization for employment?
23. What types of other jobs do you have here?
24. Do you have any literature on the organization?
25. Is there anything else concerning your organization, this occupation/field of work that a person should know or you could tell me about?
26. What advice would you give to someone attempting to enter employment in this type of work/organization?
27. Can you recommend other people that I could speak with about employment here, this type of work, in other or similar organizations?



## NETWORKING WHEEL



## Job Search Contact Sheet

Contact Date	Employer Address & Phone #	Contact Name	Action (Resume, interview, job lead)	Interview Date & Time	Interviewer Name	Thank You letter	Expense	Results, Notes, Future Actions